

BHS Gifted
Course Selection Considerations

There are several underlying considerations to take into account when selecting courses and a full schedule:

Choice: This is a constant in life. BHS provides you with multiple curricula and course options; however, you will not be able to schedule every course you may want. A single-course elective may be offered at the same time as the higher level math you want. You need to decide which choice will serve you and your future-self best. Higher grades in a less challenging class versus a greater challenge that may result in lower grades, which will serve you better in the long run? Dual Enrollment and the time away from the HS compared to the rigor and time devoted to AP classes at BHS is another choice. The following considerations may help.

Career goals : If career goals are strong or well defined, choose the courses that will provide you with the best preparation; if not well defined, take more of a variety, choose challenging courses in those subjects in which you have a stronger interest or ability.

Challenge: Life is about facing and managing challenges, high school is a good time to take on academic challenges as you have your family, teachers and peers to support and encourage you. If you stay in a comfortable zone without much challenge, you will not develop these skills as effectively. Challenge your abilities now, learn from the experience, and this will pay dividends when you are in a new environment, facing challenges at a time when you are expected to be more independent (this allows your parents to worry a little less too :)

“Challenge” analogies: Coaches push you athletically, you had to run until you thought you couldn’t run anymore, then they make you run again. You do it, you learn to overcome and push through what you thought were your previous limits, next time you go further. **Take on some academic sweat to get stronger!** As an infant you fell many times learning to walk, you made many errors in learning to talk; you learned from each experience, fine tuned the skill, now you take both for granted... you can walk and talk at the same time! **What seems difficult now can become second nature with the right preparation.** Remember your transition from 2nd to 3rd grade, from elementary to MS, from MS to HS, each time facing an unknown, “harder,” and for some, scary experience; you have survived each of these challenges and quickly adapted to new expectations and demands. **Continue to add new challenges, you’ll be a better you !**

Interests/abilities: Take your most challenging courses in those areas of strong interest or ability. If they can fit, take some courses that you have an interest in that may not be traditional.

Overall course load: Take into account class work, homework, afterschool commitments. You want to challenge your abilities, but not overwhelm them. One of the skills you need to learn for life after high school is time management, if the course load is too easy, you will not strengthen this skill. Several students have taken on three or four AP classes in the same year and been successful, but this is not recommended for everyone. You must be honest with yourself, assess your capabilities, get input from teachers and others to determine what would be the right mix of courses.

Balance: Your primary job during high school is academic preparation and achievement in order to make a successful transition to college, trade, or vocation. However, you also need to add to your experiences and explore opportunities. Extra-curricular activities, whether clubs, volunteer work or athletics are important learning experiences that are valued by colleges and employers. However, these extra-curriculars should not interfere with you advancing your knowledge and skill set as a student.

Learn: Once your choices are made and the experience is underway, learn from it. Hopefully it was a good decision that serves your development and interests well. But, you may find it to have been the wrong choice for you, if so, learn from it. Find something positive, something you can gain from the experience that will help you develop as a student or as a person. Mistakes are another constant in life, the goal is to learn from them and not make the same mistake twice; make lemonade from the lemons.